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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a practice-based theory of administrative, supervisory, and organizational decision-making, which views the organizational decision-making process as a social enterprise. It also describes how to facilitate organizational change by promoting faculty involvement and shows how to increase the potential success of reform efforts. The theoretical perspective is based on three propositions--that decision making is at the heart of the administrative and supervisory processes; that successful organizational change must involve all members; and that people learn to make effective decisions through experience. The paper presents a four-phase decision-making process: identify the problem, generate interactions among the players, negotiate, and deal with the consequences. Brief examples of how various groups have applied the model are offered--Japanese automakers engaged in organizational decision-making, supervisors and teachers involved in curriculum design, and schools involved in restructuring. One figure is included. (Contains 35 references.) (LMI)

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THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORY DECISION-MAKING AS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Wise decision-making comes from experience,
and experience comes from bad decisions.
Anonymous

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INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this narrative is threefold. The first is to present a Theory/Practice of Administrative, Supervisory, and Organizational Decision-Making as a Social Enterprise to improve administrative and supervisory decision-making, the heart of these enterprises (Barnard, 1938; Wolf, 1972; Griffiths, 1959). The second goal is to describe how to facilitate organizational change by promoting faculty involvement. The third objective is to illustrate how to increase the potential for success both in the day-to-day practice of administration and supervision and in any reform efforts (TQM, site-based management, middle schools, restructuring) with an effective and simple decision-making theory and process.

A decision-making strategy can provide considerable value for those involved in any enterprise from the most simple to the most complicated. Primarily, it can help participants not only to predict the steps of the decision-making process they will encounter, but also to take command of this process. A theory/practice of organizational decision-making as a social enterprise will facilitate administrators, supervisors, and teachers to describe,

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analyze, and predict the phases to utilize in recognizing an issue or a problem, and then in designing, developing, and implementing plans to make effective decisions in organizations. The person(s) and organization(s) in possession of such knowledge will have a powerful tool in making the social process of decision-making in organizations more effective and efficient. Such a strategy can provide educators with an effective approach to develop and generate decisions that make more sense. In short, educators can gain more control over both their professional life and their organizational life.

Therefore, the main focus of this paper constitutes the development of this organizational decision-making theory and practice as a social enterprise. The rest are examples. In addition, it seems important to these writers that the philosophy of science comprises an essential component in providing a comprehensive approach to this Theory and Practice of Organizational Decision-Making as a Social Enterprise.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This theoretical perspective is based on three propositions. The first contends that the process of decision-making which constitutes a social enterprise is at the heart of the administrative and supervisory process, crucial for any administrator's and supervisor's success in any organization. Barnard (1938) in an interview shortly before his death (Wolf, 1972) addressed this viewpoint asserting that decision-making is the fundamental administrative process (and by extrapolation, supervision), "...basic to all the others" (p. 22).

Next, any massive change in organizations must involve people on all levels in key decision-making, a social process which promotes their support. Barnard (1938) focused on

this in delineating the three indispensable components of all formal organizations: (1) a common purpose, (2) communicating that purpose throughout the organization, and (3) a system of cooperation to communicate and achieve the common purpose. These comprise three fundamental functions of the executive. Campbell, Corbally, and Ramseyer (1962) observed that the task of the administrator and supervisor in developing a common purpose was to facilitate establishing it, not to establish it himself. Indeed, this theoretical approach inescapably points to the social context that constitutes the arena in which the social process of organizational decision-making takes place.

The third proposition contends that we learn to make effective decisions through experience.

RESEARCH METHOD

The four authors met previously and created a theory of curriculum development (Shapiro, Benjamin, Hunt, & Shapiro, 1995). The four-year process was experiential, much as that used by Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Freud, and others. In that earlier effort we also created a broader construct, an organizational decision-making process that comprises an a social enterprise in nature. It is the latter construct that is addressed in this article.

A DEFINITION

Generating any theory is an enterprising task. Claiming to have developed a theory of organizational decision-making is imposing, since any claim to have designed a theory has to meet rigorous criteria, the first of which is to define theory.

Daniel Griffiths (1959) developed his definition of theory from the work of Herbert Feigl (1951), asserting, "A theory is essentially a set of assumptions from which a set of empirical laws (principles) may be derived.... A theory, itself, cannot be proved by direct experiment. Two illustrations of this from the history of science demonstrate the point. The Copernican Theory of the Solar System was accepted some 150 years before there was direct evidence of its truth. Likewise, Boyle's Law and Guy-Lussac's Law, both experimentally derived, were known long before the dynamical theory of gasses was formulated" (pp. 28-29). Griffiths noted by his definition that a theory can only be substantiated, not proved.

THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF A THEORY:

- OR, WHAT MAKES A THEORY A THEORY

Theory will be defined and its three major properties delineated; that is, a theory must have the ability to describe, analyze, and predict a range of phenomena. The widely-misunderstood relationship of theory to practice is next tackled, followed by several characteristics, including its objectivity, comprehensiveness, limits, validity, and reliability.

To be a theory, a proposal must be: (1) descriptive, (2) analytical, and (3) predictive.

Descriptive

For a theory to be descriptive, it must point to phenomena that are being described. For example, the germ theory of disease describes a multitude of illnesses caused by germs, such as measles and tuberculosis. Similarly, a theory of organizational decision-making must describe some aspect(s) of decision-making in organizations, such as its structure, its process,

the nature of its social context, or other major aspects.

Analytic

The next test a theory must pass is its analytic power. Any theory must be useful to analyze the phenomena it covers. The germ theory analyzes a host of diseases and also explains their onset and existence as being caused by germs. Causation is an analytic statement. A theory of organizational decision-making must enable its users to analyze some aspects of decision-making, whether it be the structure of decision-making, the process of developing decisions in organizations, or the implementation of decisions.

Predictive

Another major requirement for a theory to have validity is that it must be predictive, or generalizable. For example, the germ theory of disease predicts that if germs are destroyed, all germ-based diseases will also terminate (hopefully, before their host). Drugs are designed with this outcome in mind, destroying harmful germs. Therefore, for a theory of organizational decision-making to be a theory, it must be predictive. It should have the capacity to predict structural aspects of organizational decision-making if the focus is on structure, or guide us to the social setting within which people function.

The Model and the Taxonomy - Theories?

With the aforementioned definition of theory we are able further to distinguish among such constructs as (1) models, (2) taxonomies, and (3) theories. Zais (1976, pp. 91-93) defined models as "miniature representations that summarize data and/or phenomena and thus act as an aid to comprehension. In other words, 'models in science act like metaphors in language; they enlighten us by suggesting arguments by analogy from known

resemblances to resemblances so far unnoticed.'" (O'Connor, 1957, p. 90). To clarify further, Zais pointed to four kinds of models:

1. A physical or working model, often three-dimensional, to show how it works.

2. A conceptual or verbal model such as the industrial model of schooling.

3. A mathematical model, such as in chemistry and physics [Ohm's Law (amperes = volts/ohms) which describes the relationships of three constructs in electricity].

4. A graphic representation (maps, grammatical diagrams of sentences, graphs describing an object's components) which explain relationships among parts.

The taxonomy comprises a classification device. As such it points out relationships, such as those in the Periodic Table of Elements. Each element can be analyzed in terms of its atomic weights, its electrons and other particles, and their relationships to each other. However, while we can see elements described and can analyze their relationships, neither the model nor the taxonomy is predictive.

IS THEORY PRACTICAL: A CONTRADICTION?

Illustrations of theory appear to be useful at this point. The germ theory of disease noted that certain germs will cause specific diseases. A derivation of combined gas laws (including Boyle's Law) predicted that at a fixed temperature the pressure of confined ideal gas varies inversely with its volume. In educational administration, Guba and Getzels (1957) proposed that administration comprises a social process in which behavior is conceived as both a function of the nomothetic and the idiographic functions of the social system. Griffiths (1959) set forth a theory of administration and supervision stating that it consists

basically of decision-making (although his model is actually one of problem-solving).

These theories can and do provide considerable guidance to the practitioner. Much of medicine is based on countering harmful germs with antibiotics and other "germ-killers" to return us to health. Cryotherapy treatment (by intense cold materials) is heavily dependent upon compressing certain gasses, then releasing them, causing them to expand rapidly, whereupon they become frozen solid to treat various skin diseases. Application of the gas laws turns out to be quite useful in a physician's armamentarium of treatment options.

Guba and Getzels' (1957) theory generated numerous studies in administration focusing on role functions, role expectations, leadership styles, and sources of conflict. Griffiths' (1959) formulation of administration as decision-making has profoundly impacted the practice of administration. It points to the administrator's need to focus on decision-making in the process of administration and implies the incorporation of Guba and Getzels' theory that administration is a social process.

If we develop Barnard's and Griffiths' notion that decision-making is crucial to administration and supervision, we ask a host of questions about the process. Who should be involved? When? For what purposes? Are there various types or levels of decision-making? We become acutely aware of the decision-making process and focus considerable attention upon it.

Practitioners are wont to poke fun at theory, claiming that wide gulfs separate theory and practice. New teachers invariably are advised by veterans to forget theory. Veterans often insist that the incoming recruits should abandon their theories, generalizations, and

concepts and adopt the veterans' personal hunches and untested, non-research-based, and unarticulated theories instead (which they hold dear), while simultaneously denying their existence. In actuality, the two are intertwined, inescapably interrelated.

Dewey (1938) addressed the relationship between theory and practice. In Experience and Education he noted "...a theory and practice of education which proceeds..." Further, he observed, "...any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles" [italics added]. Dewey's deliberate use of the singular indicated that he perceived theory and practice as one.

Colardarci and Getzels' (1955) paper on the relationship between theory and practice further investigated their connection. "Intelligent action, in any sense of that adjective, cannot be maximized without some guiding principles tentatively held." And, they noted, "the foregoing is by way of saying that theory is not merely an objective; it is a tool as well; it is a guide to practice." Additionally, they cited Dewey (1929),

> "Facts which are ... interrelated form a system, a science. The practitioner who knows the system... is evidently in possession of a powerful instrument for observing and interpreting what goes on before him. This intellectual tool affects his attitudes and modes of response in what he does. Because the range of understanding is deepened and widened, he can take into account remote consequences which were originally hidden from view and hence were ignored by his actions. Greater continuity is introduced; he does not isolate situations and deal with them in separation as he was compelled to do when ignorant of connecting principles. At the same time, his practical dealings become more flexible. Seeing more relations he sees more possibilities, more opportunities. He is emancipated from the need of following traditions and special precedents. His ability to judge being enriched, he has a wider range of alternative to select from in dealing with individual situations."

It should be apparent that the authors of this work perceive a symbiotic connection between theory and practice. In the next section this relationship will be explored more intensely.

FURTHER USES/FUNCTIONS OF THEORY

Objectivity

Before Thomas Kuhn (1962, 1970) dissected the nature of scientific thinking, scientists considered science as objective and transcending personal or cultural or scientific bias. Scientists thought that because they utilized similar methods, the same outcomes for every investigator would result. They considered research results to be objective, not influenced by personal or cultural bias.

Kuhn pointed out that scientists tended to march along the same conceptual track, filling in spaces, dotting i's and crossing t's, not perceiving outside "accepted" parameters of thinking in their fields. So, scientists tended to follow the widely held beliefs, concepts, assumptions, and paradigms of "accepted" thinking, often rejecting mavericks who looked outside the mainstream "box". Casti (1989) stated, "...what is taken to be true at any moment is more a matter of social convention in the scientific community than it is a product of logical methods and procedures." Thus, while scientists value objectivity, it is somewhat illusory, since any field often changes over the long haul. Thus, scientific inquiry is colored by the perspectives, assumptions, values, culture, and paradigms of researchers. Obviously, scientists who are members of a culture and a number of sub-cultures, cannot escape their professional and social cultures.

The essence of scientific enterprise is to inquire into the nature of a field. Therefore, the scientific process is virtually equated with change. Findings in science have lead to change in all societies touched by the process and results of scientific inquiry.

Comprehensiveness

Another value of theory is that it provides comprehensiveness. A great range of events, facts, or details can be covered through using abstract ideas or concepts. For example, a great many diseases are covered by the germ theory of disease. Similarly, we do not have different laws for different falling objects. We do not have a separate law of falling feathers and a separate law of falling two-by-fours. All fall at the same speed in a vacuum.

Thus, a theory of decision-making in organizations (or for any other area) should have a degree of comprehensiveness and cover a variety of phenomena. A theory of organizational decision-making as a social enterprise, therefore, should deal with a range of decision-making processes as well as point to the social context within which the enterprise occurs.

A Guide to New Knowledge

A major value of science is as a guide to new knowledge. The discovery of the planet Neptune is one striking illustration of this function. Beyond the scope of the naked eye, Neptune was discovered because of irregularities in Uranus' elliptical motion. Since Newton's Laws of Motion had been developed and validated, any irregularity of Uranus was deduced to be caused by the presence of a major object. Through this deduction, astronomers discovered Neptune. Similar events led to the discovery of Pluto.

If a theory of organizational decision-making is formulated focusing on processes, it should lead to new processes in organizational decision-making, or it should lead to heretofore unnoticed processes.

A Guide to Action

It follows that theory has considerable utility to guide action. If parents see their small child looking feverish, developing a running nose, looking red-eyed, they hunch that the child is ill. Plopping a thermometer into the youngster's mouth is standard operating procedure since the parents are theorizing that their child is having problems with a disease caused by bacteria. For the astronomer, theory focuses where she actually looks in investigating new celestial phenomena. For the administrative or supervisory investigator or practitioner, theory can focus attention on structure, on process, or at any factor(s) toward which the theory points. If it is a theory about process, it can help analyze the processes involved in decision-making, assisting us in perceiving those processes that may have been overlooked. From such a formulation we may be able to generalize about decision-making processes and to utilize them in practice. Perceiving the process more accurately might enable us to predict the next phases to act more expeditiously -- and with greater precision. Such an outcome might enable us to utilize limited resources better since it frees us from persistently re-inventing the spokes of the wheel.

Theory as a Guide to Collecting Facts

As Dewey noted (1931), "No amount of mere fact finding develops science nor the scientific attitude in either physics or social affairs. Facts merely amassed and piled up are dead; a burden which only adds to confusion. When ideas, hypotheses, begin to play upon facts, when they are methods for experimental use in action, then light dawns; then, it becomes possible to discriminate significant from trivial facts, and relations take the place of isolated scraps."

The American focus on facts leads some to collect data and then to look for

meaning. This places the cart in front of the horse. Certainly, facts are basic to building a theory. But when we start to collect facts we have to remind ourselves of Cohen's (1931) admonition, "Aye, but what facts?" Without a theory, facts could be gathered in copious quantities, but we would not know which to select. Theory gives meaning to facts -- it helps select facts to examine.

Defining a Fact

A fact is defined as an event or happening that two or more competent observers can agree upon (Johnson, 1958). This definition points up the tentative and subjective nature of human observation upon which we build our theories.

Can a Theory Map "Reality"?

The above analysis next leads to the subjective nature of the possibility of theory conceptually "mapping" reality (Zais, 1976). When the subjectivity of cultural factors, personal experiences, and predilections influencing one's conceptual "maps," is added, it is clear that maps are personally and culturally distorted and we can never "really" know as a certainty that what we believe is not biased.

Zais quoted Conant (1952) for this viewpoint,

> "Scientific theory should not be regarded as an objective map that describes and explains reality, but rather, as 'a policy -- an economical and fruitful guide to action by scientific investigators.'
>
> ...Scientific, empirical-rational methods had shown that scientific theory was not, as had been thought, a value-free, objective description of reality, but a construct invented to advance human endeavors....
>
> Theory regarded as a map, as mentioned earlier, purports to tell us what the world is really like. It implies discovered knowledge, which literally represents an uncovering of the nature of reality. By contrast, modern scientific theory--that is, theory regarded as a policy for action --claims only to tell us what are the best

> representations of the world in terms of present experience. Knowledge from this point of view is regarded as constructed, that is, fabricated on the basis of human experience for particular ends-in-view. ...theory may vary accordingly as purposes for which it is constructed may vary.
>
> ...As we noted in a previous paragraph, all of the evidence available seems to indicate that the revolution in modern physics has rendered the "map" concept of scientific theory both an illusion and a presumption. Scientific theory not only does not describe the nature of reality, but it cannot. The reason, some physicists contend, is that theory is a product of human thought processes, and modern physics suggests that human thought processes may not correspond sufficiently to the structure of nature to permit us to think about it at all (Bridgman, 1952, pp. 86,87). Put another way, the nature of reality and the concept of existence are meaningless, not because of the nature of the world, but because of the construction of the human organism. It is simply impossible for man (sic) to transcend the human reference point. 'We cannot even express this in the way we would like.... It is literally true that the only way of reacting to this is to shut up'." Bridgman (1952).

As Bogan (Personal communication, 1992) noted, "All science is colored by the perspectives and understandings of the researchers... No human enterprise is an objective experience, and science is a human enterprise."

Validity and Reliability

The preceding discussion provides evidence of the difficulty of obtaining validity. Working within the confines of cultural perceptions and language we aim for validity, but validity has culturally-based limitations. Notwithstanding, scientists seek evidence that we are measuring what we think we are measuring. Validity helps develop confidence that what we say we are investigating is, indeed, what we are examining.

Reliability is our probable certainty that the results obtained will be derived again using the same procedures or measures. For example, if we measure something with an old rubber band which, when stretched, does not snap back to its original size, and we measure again with the stretched rubber band, the results will not be reliable. Remeasuring the same

object will not produce the same results because the measuring instrument is changed. Reliability is compromised.

Without reliability and objectivity we have fiction, not science. Without both we cannot with confidence point to the certainty of knowledge. To be sure, the novelist and poet provide us with vital insights, but they do not produce scientific material.

Consequences of a Lack of Theory in Any Field

To this point we have focused on the nature of and functions of theory. The lack of adequate theory in organizational decision-making has led to the normal consequences of a field without such guidance. Literature in decision-making in organizations reveals lack of common terminology and agreed-upon definitions. Griffiths' (1959) decision-making theory, for example, is a problem-solving model. Lack of theory leads to a good deal of confusion. If a field cannot establish its terminology how can its practitioners communicate? Even with standard terminology and meaning, communication is difficult (Benjamin Lee Whorf, 1947, 1956). Whorf notes that a majority of attempts to communicate fail even with those from the same socio-economic class and profession.

Similarly, since we have little theory to guide our practice, we engage in undirected and non-focused professional practice.

A SUMMARY OF THEORY - TO THIS POINT

The nature of theory has been our focus. Theory was defined and its three major properties delineated, including its ability to describe and to analyze a range of phenomena,

and to predict. The relationship of theory to practice was examined, noting that they were inextricably united, each indispensable to and based on the other. Also examined was theory's objectivity, its being comprehensive by covering a great range of facts, and the necessity of using theory to collect facts, instead of the reverse. We noted the limits of theory, that it is a construct created by human beings based on experience, and, therefore, influenced by their paradigms, beliefs, world views, cultures, sub-cultures, and personalities. Two basic requirements for good theory, validity and reliability, and problems produced by lack of theory in scientific and professional fields were pointed out, including confusion created by unstandardized terminology and definitions.

Thus, scientific theories cannot claim objectivity, nor that they "map reality," (Zais, 1976), but, rather, that they provide a "guide to action" (Conant, 1952). They do not constitute a direct one-to-one relationship to practice.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN MODERN SCIENTIFIC THINKING

Thomas Kuhn (1962, 1970) revolutionized science by analyzing epochal changes in the history of scientific thinking. Kuhn focused on paradigms (that is, prevailing world views, models of thinking, ways of explaining phenomena). Kuhn pointed to the shift in physics from no theory to Aristotelian Physics as a major change in thinking. Similarly, the change from Aristotelian to Newtonian Physics was a major paradigm shift since the prevailing world view established by Aristotelian ideas of matter were totally altered. Thus, he proposed "...every scientist works within a distinctive paradigm, a kind of intellectual gestalt that colors the way Nature is perceived." (Casti, 1989).

Other paradigm shifts in Western Civilization include the change from viewing the earth as flat to considering it a sphere. Such a shift eradicated the idea that if one sailed far enough, one would fall off the edges. People, then, could believe that they could explore the planet. Another major change greatly facilitating exploration lay in developing the constructs of latitude and longitude. Prior to their creation, it was impossible to locate with accuracy any point on the earth, and then to communicate it to others. Literally, we did not know where we were.

Another major shift in human thinking includes the shift from considering the earth as the center of the universe (geocentrism) to the sun as the center of the solar system (heliocentrism). Aristotle's world gestalt viewed the elements of the universe as earth, air, fire, and water. We moderns view atoms as the basic units/building blocks of the universe. From Aristotle's day through the Middle Ages and into the early modern era, humors and temperaments were known to cause disease. The germ theory of disease has replaced that paradigm. And psychosomatic medicine has modified that paradigm.

For this present work, a paradigm shift or a new construct may be in the making in the organizational decision-making, since we move from a theory of problem-solving to a theory of four phases of decision-making in organizations as a social enterprise, hopefully creating a shift in professional's and in practitioners' thinking. With the development of this theory, the practitioner can describe, analyze, and predict behavior and thinking in the social process of organizational decision-making. Obviously, more theories will be proposed and different paradigms will emerge from the present base of knowledge to compete with and eventually to replace this one.

THE THEORY: A PROCESS THEORY OF DECISION-MAKING AS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Step #1: Sensing a Problem, Issue, Concern, Need, or Situation - and Developing a Plan

The theory being proposed is a process theory. The process of decision-making in organizations starts when one or more people sense a discontinuity, a problem, a need, a concern, or a crisis crashing down on them. The process may begin as an attempt to recognize the situation. This generally leads to an idea which can develop into a tentative plan, however vaguely defined. The "plan" could be an intention to do something. Recognizing the existence of an issue or concern implies an desire to do something about it. This process is applicable both to formal and informal organizations, to formal and informal decision-making. If several people are involved, the decision-making process becomes a social enterprise at this phase.

Step #2: Generating Interactions Among Those Involved -- the Essence of a Social Enterprise of Decision-Making

The next process in making decisions about the problem or issue consists in collecting key people in the organization (if a school, teachers, supervisors, administrators, students) together to work on these intentions. Thus, we generate a series of interactions among individual reference groups and people involved. The interactions commence as people communicate their purposes and goals to define and solve a problem or concern. Thus, while this theory points to a series of processes, those processes can and do become mixed, and are not in sequential order. Involving people constitutes the beginning of the social enterprise of decision-making.

The "Interaction" phase provides opportunities to explore *the problem or concern,* through others' eyes. At this point in the process, a more thorough definition of the problem may occur, an utterly indispensable component of the process. It makes little sense to search "... for solutions to un- or ill-defined problems" (Hills, 1975). Thus, interaction may clarify problems and issues.

At this point, factors in the social context or setting may arise, such as oft-hidden agenda issues and concerns, (for example, administrators' or power groups' wishes to retain and/or expand their power). Such issues as race, ethnicity, and gender may emerge as potent concerns influencing interactions. The multiplicity of issues in our society may arise, such as the Far Right's religious issues or minority's concerns. Teachers may view efforts toward any reform with cynicism, which may surface as people interact. People bring open and hidden issues into their interaction.

Step #3: The Process Of Negotiating

In the preceding "Interaction" phase, people interact to define their intentions, interests, hidden agendas, institutional situations, and much more. As interactions continue and ideas emerge, a series of negotiations emerge and develop, another phase in the social enterprise in which participants become engaged in the decision-making. Indeed, if the implementors are involved this early in the process (in business organizations, the employees; in hospitals, the nurses; in churches, synagogues, and temples, the lay members and religious leaders), negotiations develop often with intensity.

At this point in the social process the social context issues such as those mentioned in phase #2, interactions, may emerge more robustly. Power issues may be played out more

earnestly when players realize that major consequences (Step #4) hang in the balance depending upon agreements reached. Similarly, gender, ethnic, or other issues may rise at this phase since people begin to realize that decisions made generate immediate consequences.

Efforts to restructure schools, to shift supervisory models, or even to use a different supervisory check sheet, take their direction in this phase, with participants recognizing that decisions will affect the organization for at least the immediate, if not the long-range, future. Governmental organizations involved with environmental concerns must deal with them at this stage. Decisions have to -- and will -- be made. Ultimately, the altered plan, in whatever form it emerges, develops.

Step #4: Consequences/Outcomes

The last process consists of outcomes which may, but often may not, be what was intended originally. The last process occurs (not ends) as a consequence of the negotiations.

The acronym of **PINC** may be applied, utilizing the initials of each step.

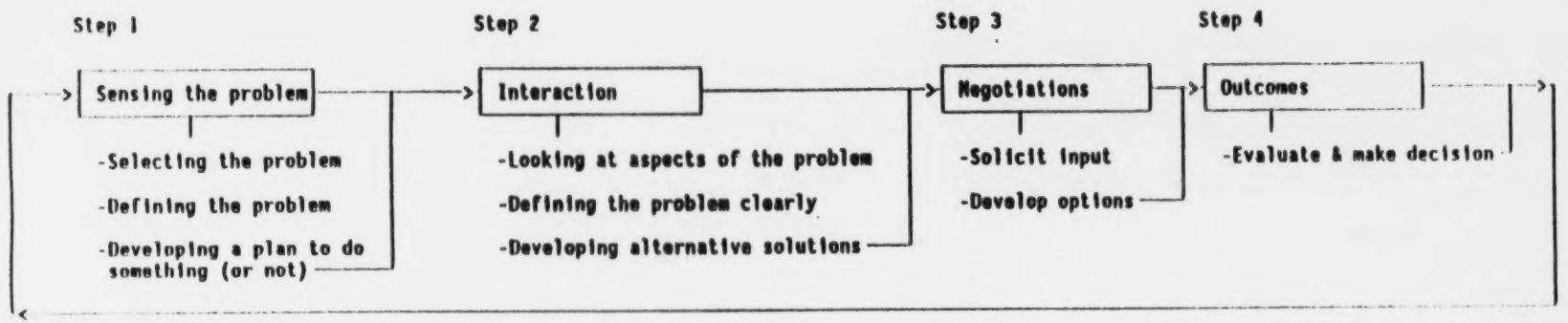
Summary

To summarize, four processes are proposed:

1. Sensing a problem, issue, concern, need, or situation and developing a plan.
2. Generating interactions.
3. Negotiating by the various players.
4. Consequences, Outcomes.

Figure 1 depicts the **PINC** theory.

Figure 1
Steps in the Decision-Making Process (Generic)



THE PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING -- AN ON-GOING CYCLE

Even after step #4, the process of organizational decision-making is not concluded.As the individuals and social systems work with the negotiated outcomes, they change various aspects of potential options. If it is a government agency, additions to regulations are developed, others are reinterpreted, and still others may be ignored. If it is an industry or business, management and the union (if one exists) negotiate a contract, and then management administers the contract. Grievances may be filed to change policies management has developed in its administration of the contract. Both sides gather evidence to alter the outcomes in the next round of negotiations.

If the change is an alteration of supervisory procedures, teachers, supervisors, and administrators examine the consequences carefully, and will suggest modifications in the procedures or forms. If the outcome is a changed curriculum in a school, selected readings are changed, new points are brought up, and others are appended while old ones are eliminated or altered. If it is the first phase of a restructuring plan, people examine each other's reactions to the outcome (perhaps one teaching team is established) to determine the next steps. So, they interact and negotiate to select the next outcomes. Thus, the process of change continues, and continues.

Even the most autocratic Theory X administrator or supervisor cannot implement his decisions solely by himself. Subordinates must be involved, responsibility delegated, turfs negotiated.

The consequences of this theory for the Holy Grail of organizational permanence and stability emerge starkly. The dynamics of organizations, in which various players interact

and negotiate, inevitably cause them to evolve (Wilson, et al., 1969; Pascale, 1990).

Another example of the impact of this organizational decision-making theory on the illusion of organizational permanence and stability is the example of curriculum in schools. The thrust to develop "teacher-proof" curriculum by national projects or by administrators and supervisors is doomed. Teachers and supervisors working with the curriculum, change it, shape it to their classes, their organizational and classroom culture, their personalities, available materials, and students' circumstances.

The thrust to develop fool-proof supervisory systems follows the same inexorable fate of impermanence. Florida's experience with the Florida Performance Measurement System is illustrative. Administrators, supervisors, and teachers were thoroughly trained in standardized workshops over a several day period in the philosophy, concepts, procedures (utilizing standardized tape recordings of teacher behavior), and forms required. In order to avoid the phenomenon of observer "drift", updates were conducted annually. Participants were tested both conceptually and through observations of teacher performance to ensure accuracy of observations (B.O. Smith, Peterson & Micceri, 1987).

According to the authors' theory, the classroom teacher, or teaching team, is the focal center of the curriculum delivery system process, just as in the mental institution the orderly comprises the key position of the operation (Goffman, 1959). Obviously, then, this theory is not a stage theory with clear, separate stages. Rather, it is a process theory which focuses in the patterns of interactions involved in the process of producing and developing. In short, it is a theory of organizational decision-making as a social enterprise.

In many respects, it is similar to Whitehead's (1946) analysis of the phases of teaching

a unit or a lesson plan, Romance, Precision, and Generalization. At any one time, both for Whitehead and this theory/practice, one phase may dominate, but more than one also may be present at any one time.

This theory is a theory of organizational behavior, as well as of organizational decision-making, which are social enterprises in nature. Thus, the theory can be used to examine the decision-making taking place in any process that occurs in organizations as the people inside and outside of it sense an issue, plan, interact, and negotiate to produce agreements, and then take actions to implement them, producing consequences.

Mintzberg's (1979, p. 35) formulation of five organizational processes or flows might produce useful insights into the PINC organizational decision-making process as a social enterprise. Mintzberg proposed that organizations produce five flows in their functioning. These consist of a system of formal authority, of regulated (work) flows, of informal communications, of work constellations, and of ad hoc decision-making processes. Although Mintzberg labels one process as decision-making in nature, the others require decision-making in order to function.

Hunt, Gagliardo, and Pearson's interestingly titled study ("Sugar Ray" School-Based Decision Groups, 1992) of school-based effective small decision-making groups is significant to this view of organizational decision-making as social process. Hunt et al found that with experience the top quartile of elementary school decision-making groups made their decisions in combinations. As the groups developed experience in decision-making, and as the computer fed then results, their speed and effectiveness increased. Contrary to popular belief, they found no significant differences in effectiveness of decision-making groups based

on gender, administrative experience, and race, but found that those with field experience, if performing poorly, would change their patterns of making decisions, thereby improving their decision-making.

Comparison of decision-making in loosely-coupled versus tightly coupled organizations (Weick, 1982) provides a useful focus of study to test the theory empirically. Additionally, varying leader behavior styles provide interesting data and insights into organizational decision-making, as well as other functions.

As an example of the wide implications of this theory, the following is examined. Because of a variety of problems, some Japanese automobile manufacturers considered assembling some units in the United States, step # 1, planning. For this to become a major decision, it had to involve a large number of people in interactions to develop a sense of the extent of this move and its implications. The ensuing negotiations included considerable discussion on who would go, what per cent of employees would be Americans, what percentage of administrators and supervisors would be Japanese and what authority could be delegated to their American counterparts. At the end, the consequences of the preceding decisions and a multitude of others needed addressing before action could be taken on the plan and its widespread tentacled implications.

In education, the theory can be used to describe, analyze, and predict extensively. The complex process of curriculum development, for example, occurs when dissatisfaction of individual teachers, administrators, or supervisors becomes shared by others both inside and outside the organization (Blumer, 1946). Alternatively, generally a supervisor or even an administrator may decide that it is time to change a curriculum, such as social studies. This

individual, or the people who build a shared dissatisfaction, then develop a prospectus or a plan, however vaguely defined, to change it. Proposals are made to examine a specific area of curriculum, usually commencing with an appointed committee normally chaired by a supervisor. Committee members commence by interacting. Different interests involved negotiate viewpoints and interests. For example, some may want to include Latin America in a course on World History, since most approaches ignore this area. This is discussed and negotiations may occur in the committee and in its sub social systems within, and sometimes, outside the school itself.

In the end, some consequences have to be reported to administrators who inform the Board of Education on the consequences of the PINC process. Perhaps greater emphasis on Latin America is included -- or not. The point here is the process. Thus, transactions among people within and external to the organization result in curriculum changes. These never stabilize into eternally set curricula, since change continues both on the district and on the classroom level. From the perspective of this theory, curriculum may be perceived as the process of negotiating agreements that people make in their social enterprise of decision-making as they interact and develop agreements about what is to be learned.

The process of organizational decision-making as a social enterprise operates as districts and individual schools consider reforms such as site-based management. An enterprise as complicated and fraught with major consequences as site-based management, becomes a widely-tentacled organizational decision-making process since the social context must be considered. A plan has to be developed to consider the enterprise. Key social systems have to become involved in interacting to judge ramifications. Various players and

social systems have to interact, a process during which they begin to negotiate. For example, what supervisors and administrators are responsible for what functions, what schools, which grade levels, which subjects? Eventually, some decision, a consequence, has to be made whether to proceed -- and how to accomplish that process. In short, PINC constitutes an organizational decision-making process.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This narrative focused on three purposes. They were to present a theory/practice of administrative and organizational decision-making to improve administrative and supervisory decision-making in education, next to facilitate organizational change by promoting faculty involvement, and last to increase the potential for success both in the day-to-day practice of administration, supervision, and educational reform efforts.

The value of utilizing a decision-making strategy to empower educators in their decision-making efforts in administration and supervision generally, and in such areas as TQM, middle schools, and site-based management was noted. The theoretical perspective was based on three propositions. The first is that decision-making is at the heart of the administrative and supervisory processes. The second is that successful change in organizations must involve all members to benefit from additional perceptions and to promote their support. The third proposition is that we learn to make effective decisions through experience. The method of research was experiential and empirical, concluding that the organizational decision-making process comprises a social enterprise. The social context

constitutes the arena within which the social enterprise of organizational decision-making takes place.

The four phase process of the theory/practice of organizational decision-making presents practitioners with a construct facilitating efforts to describe, analyze, and predict the precise phases to utilize to recognize a problem and then to design, develop, and implement plans and processes to make effective decisions. The person(s) and organization(s) possessing such knowledge now have a systematic tool which they can apply to make the social process of organizational decision-making more effective and efficient.

The administrative and supervisory organizational decision-making theory/strategy was dealt with by defining theory and noting the three major properties differentiating theory from models and taxonomies as its capacity to describe, analyze and predict. We looked at the major functions of theory including its unified relationship to practice, its necessity of being objective (within limits), and its capacity to be comprehensive, describing a range of phenomena. Collecting facts bears a relationship to the theories one holds inasmuch as one has to select from the myriad of facts available; one's beliefs and theories guide this effort. Two more indispensable aspects of theory were then discussed, its necessity to be valid and reliable.

The Theory and Practice of Organizational Decision-Making as a Social Enterprise was then presented as a process theory with its four phases delineated and its fluidity noted. These four phases or processes (with the acronym PINC) consist of:

1. Sensing a problem, issue, concern, need, or situation, and developing a plan.

2. Generating interactions among the players.

3. Negotiating by various players.

4. Consequences, outcomes.

Next, the Theory and Practice of Organizational Decision-Making as a Social Enterprise was viewed as an on-going cycle. Once a round of decisions is made, other issues and concerns arise or become consequences of outcomes, and then have to be dealt with, causing a new round in the process to develop. As people work with consequences, they change various aspects of them. Total organizational stability becomes not only an impossible dream, but also an undesirable goal.

Last, several examples or case studies of the use of the theory and practice were projected. One in organizational decision-making by Japanese auto-makers was briefly delineated, as was another regarding supervisors and teachers engaged in changing a curriculum design in a school. A third related to restructuring efforts.

Recommendations for Further Study

Since decision-making comprises the heart of the administrative and supervisory process, careful analysis of actual case studies is recommended. Of particular interest would be studies of the decision-making strategies utilized in each of the five organizational flows or processes as proposed by Mintzberg. While he speaks of decision-making as one of the five flows, obviously each of the other flows requires decision-making to unfold.

Hunt's study, which charted the course of improvement in speed and quality of decision-making with experience, comprises an area for further intense study. How do the proposed phases fare as participants develop more experience and increase their speed in decision-making? With knowledge of the theory/practice discussed in this paper, would

participants improve both speed and quality? Would others than the top quartile learn to make decisions in "Sugar Ray" combinations?

Decision-making in loosely-coupled and tightly-coupled organizations might be studied, along with that taking place under various leadership styles. Case studies of decision-making occurring in successful and unsuccessful restructuring efforts could prove useful. Included might be current reform efforts in designing supervisory models, team building, consensus decision-making, site-based management, TQM, and the like. The kind of decision-making occurring in involvement strategies versus more authoritarian models might be evaluated against administrative and supervisory organizational effectiveness criteria.

We can then work directly and empirically on the process Barnard identified more than half a century ago as the heart of administration and supervision: organizational decision-making.

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